

**WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) delivered remarks today at a press conference with Democrats and Republicans from both the House and Senate who signed letters urging the Joint Select Committee to "go big." Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:**

"Last year, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mike Mullen, said that – and I quote: 'Our national debt is our biggest national security threat.' We must do something to start paying down the debt, and that something is in the hands of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction.

"Two weeks ago, a number of us from the House – Democrats and Republicans – stood together to send a message that we want the Joint Select Committee to send us a deal that is big – about \$4 trillion in deficit reduction – and is accomplished through a balanced mix of reduction in mandatory expenditures and additional revenues.

"Today, we return and are joined by Senators from both parties who share our concern about deficits and agree that Committee members, for the sake of our country and its sound fiscal future, should recommend a package of cuts, revenues, and reforms consistent with the Bowles-Simpson, Domenici-Rivlin, and Gang of Six proposals. We have the greatest chance we've seen in a generation to strike a bold agreement that will move us forward on a sustainable fiscal path and spur our economic recovery.

"To do so is not easy, and we recognize the pressures Committee members are facing from multiple directions. But we want them to know that there is a large and significant number of us in both chambers who want such a deal and are ready to give it a fair shot. That is why we are standing together today, Democrats and Republicans united, to send a message of urgency and support. More than 100 of us in the House, split nearly evenly between the parties, have already sent a letter to this effect.

"None of us want to risk the immediate and long-term effects sequestration will bring if the

committee fails in its task. Sequestration is not a worthwhile option. At risk is more than just the economic impact but also the trust the American people have in their government to solve the most pressing problems we face as a nation.

"I thank all of my colleagues in the House and Senate who have come together to send this message that the seriousness of the debt challenge can only be met with an equally serious and bipartisan determination to do what needs to be done – to do what the American people expect of us."